

Brianah Mclean

Waterbury, CT

Southington High School

Hi, my name is Brianah Mclean. I am an 11<sup>th</sup> grader from Waterbury going to school at Southington High School for the Agriculture Science program. I am here to testify regarding Bill 6824, an act concerning the State budget.

I joined FFA because my dream was to become a veterinarian. I loved animals even though I never had a pet in real life. When I came to the Agriculture program, I had no clue that there was so much more to agriculture. I learned about FFA and the millions of jobs that are agriculture related.

My interest grew so much that I loved everything about the agriculture program from feeding and caring for the animals, creating floral arrangements, learning how to drive a tractor and how to clean fish tanks and measure pH. I even joined different teams to get involved in all the different areas of agriculture. I have learned a lot by being involved in FFA competitions, including livestock judging, extemporaneous public speaking, parliamentary procedure, food science and veterinary technology. My Agriscience research project last year was how plants react in contaminated soil. This competition and being the leader of our chapter's nursery landscape team even helped me to decide on a career in environmental science.

One of the components of the Agriculture program is that everyone needs to complete is work experience related to agriculture. I meet this requirement by mentoring middle school students through the 4-H program in Waterbury. Without being involved in the Southington Agriculture program, I would have never had so many leadership and learning experiences.

I also have a lot of fun using what I have learned in my Agriculture classes and applying it outside of school. When I am riding home from school, I name all the different species of plants I see to my mom. Last summer I was in a natural resources program where we learned to fish with workers from the D.E.E.P. and now I can name many different species of fish.

When I meet new people and they ask me why a Waterbury student is in a program in Southington, I can proudly tell them I am in an Agriculture program to gain knowledge to pursue my dreams and find my future!